Act 21
A Visitor to the Meiji Era (II)

YOU CERTAINLY HAVE, SADA-YOSHI.
SHOUJI?
I'VE SPENT A LONG TIME IN JAPAN, HAVEN'T I...

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HA HA HA! YOU CAN KEEP USING SADAYOSHI IF YOU WANT.
OH, EXCUSE ME. I SHOULD BE USING YOUR REAL NAME, DEAN MAISTRE!

YOU'VE SPENT ALL THAT TIME SERVING AS THE LIAISON WHO HAS OUR MARIONETTES SENT TO SHIROGANE HEADQUARTERS.

HEE HEE HEE ...

DEAN TURNED INTO YOUR SON SINCE HE WAS ALWAYS AROUND THE SAIGA HOUSEHOLD OVERSEEING THE TRANSPORT OF OUR MARIONETTES.

YOU'RE MY FATHER, AFTER ALL. AND I'M YOUR SON, SADAYOSHI.

OH, IS THAT HOW IT WENT?

EXACTLY! YOU AND I SWITCHED IN AND OUT SO NO ONE WOULD GET SUSPICIOUS WHEN YOU DIDN'T AGE.

SINCE WE SHIROGANE ONLY AGE A YEAR FOR EVERY FIVE WE LIVE...

YOU'D BE 103 NOW IF YOU WERE A NORMAL HUMAN.

BUT THAT WOULD LOOK TOO UNUSUAL, SO WE HAD YOU OFFICIALLY DECLARED DEAD IN A SEA-FISHING ACCIDENT WHEN YOU WERE 70...

Shouji: deceased at 70 (Has been wearing more + more makeup to appear old)

I'm 41 in Shirogane years

AND I TOOK OVER THE COMPANY AS YOUR 29-YEAR-OLD SON.

Shouji takes off the makeup + hides away

Sadayoshi takes over at 29

I'm about 23 in Shirogane years

AND THEN, 15 YEARS LATER, WHEN I WAS OFFICALLY 44, YOU CAME OUT OF HIDING ...

SWITCHED WITH ME, AND BECAME SAIGA SADAYOSHI.

Sadayoshi 15 years later

I'm 44!

(Face looks like this because of makeup)

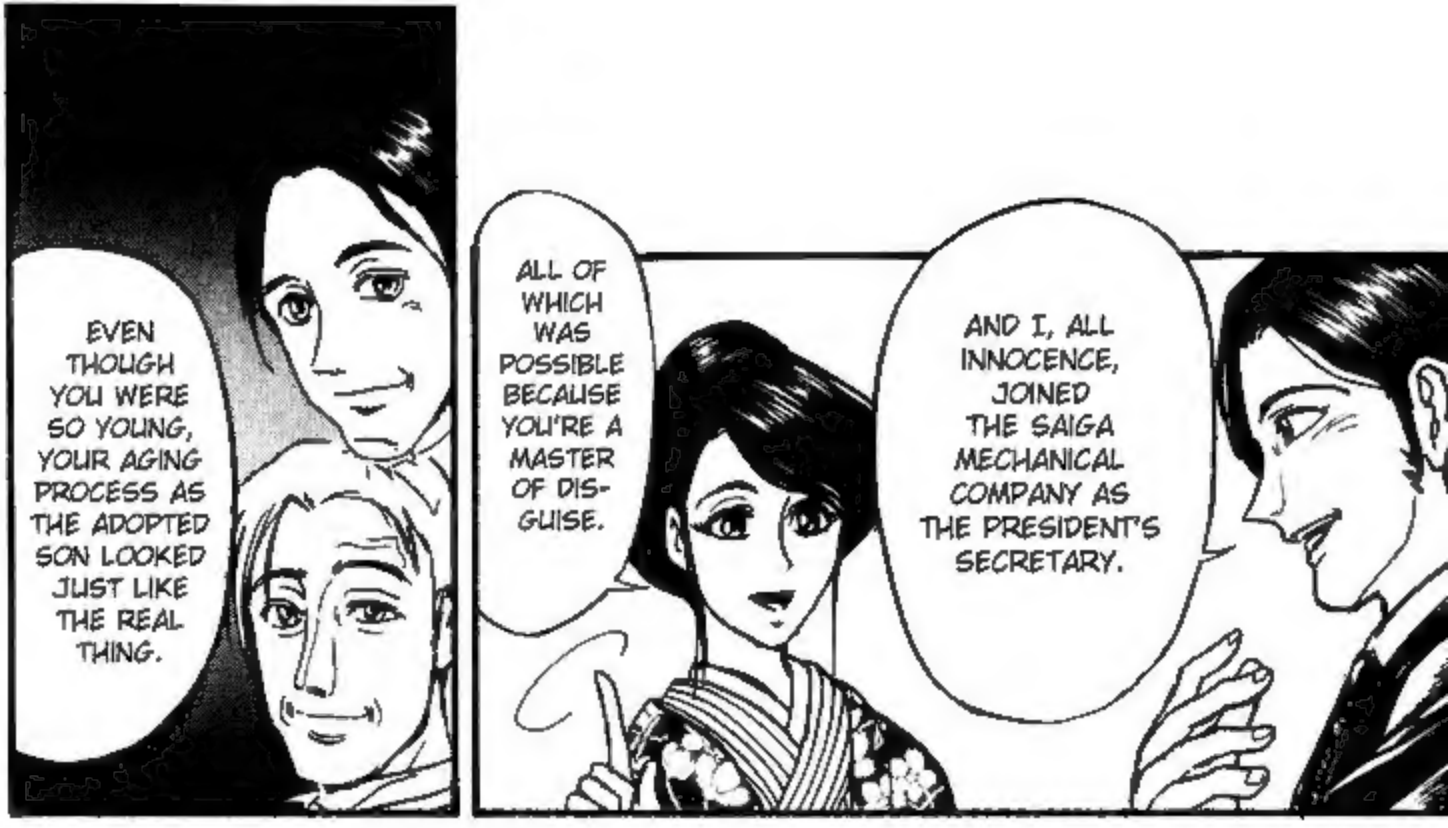
SINCE YOU WERE ACTUALLY 44 IN SHIROGANE TERMS, IT WAS A SMOOTH SWITCH.

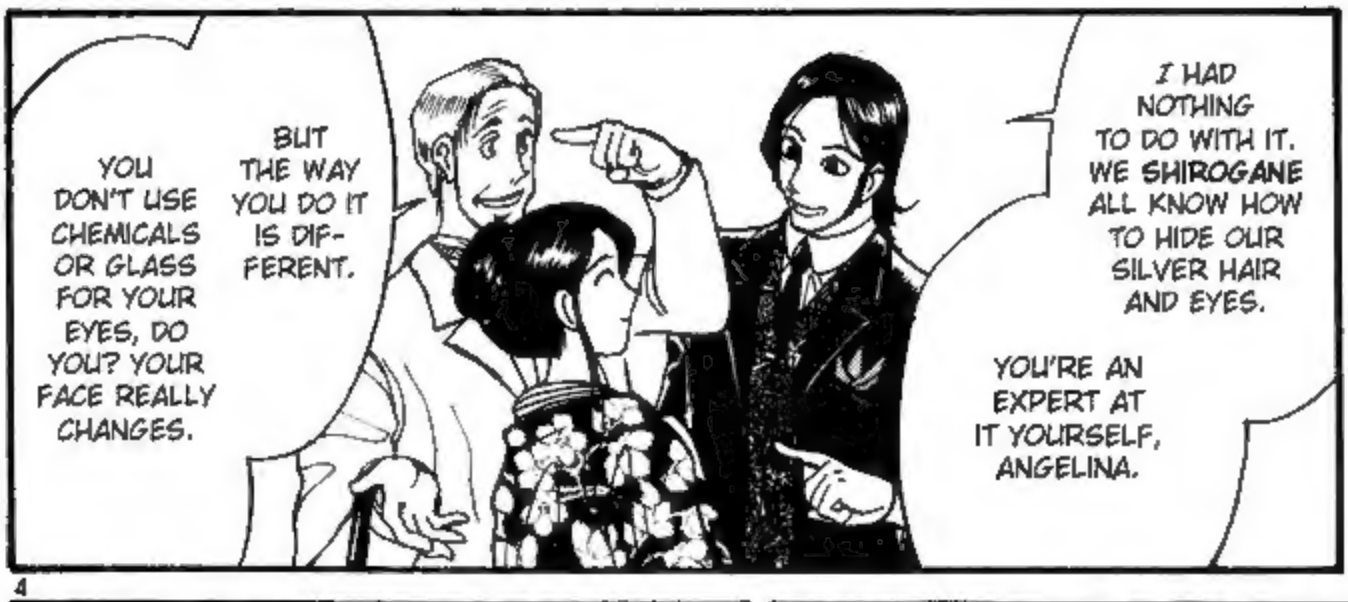
Tag!

Sadayoshi returns to normal

I'm Shouji, 44 in Shirogane years

Shouji tags in to become Sadayoshi


EVEN THOUGH YOU WERE SO YOUNG, YOUR AGING PROCESS AS THE ADOPTED SON LOOKED JUST LIKE THE REAL THING.
ALL OF WHICH WAS POSSIBLE BECAUSE YOU'RE A MASTER OF DISGUISE.
AND I, ALL INNOCENCE, JOINED THE SAIGA MECHANICAL COMPANY AS THE PRESIDENT'S SECRETARY.


YOU DON'T USE CHEMICALS OR GLASS FOR YOUR EYES, DO YOU? YOUR FACE REALLY CHANGES.
BUT THE WAY YOU DO IT IS DIFFERENT.
I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. WE SHIROGANE ALL KNOW HOW TO HIDE OUR SILVER HAIR AND EYES.
YOU'RE AN EXPERT AT IT YOURSELF, ANGELINA.

SAIGA SHOUJI, AT YOUR SERVICE!
THE MAN WHO MADE THE SAIGA MECHANICAL COMPANY NUMBER ONE IN JAPAN...

OH, WELL ...
GUILTY AS CHARGED. WATCH! I'M THE MAN WHO MARRIED THE LOVELIEST OF THE SHIROGANE WOMEN...

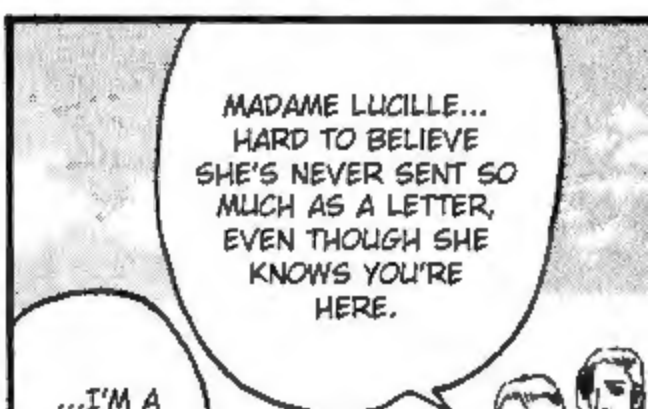
BUT THAT ENDS TODAY, TOO.
I KNOW, BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE IT PLEASANT TO WATCH.
THAT REALLY IS AMA-ZING.
IN SHORT, MY FUN DAYS WITH THE TWO OF YOU ARE AT AN END.
TO LEAVE JAPAN AND BECOME THE COM-MANDING OFFICER FOR A NEW DIVISION OF SHIRO-GANE.
YES... ORDERS FROM SHIROGANE HEADQUARTERS IN FRANCE, RIGHT?
GOODBYE, JAPAN.
AND I RETURN ONCE MORE TO A LIFE OF DESTROYING AUTOMATA.

STAY WELL, SADAYOSHI. THANKS FOR EVERYTHING THESE PAST 40 YEARS.
SAME HERE. IT'S BEEN FUN, DAD.

DEAN.
GIVE MY REGARDS TO MY MOTHER.

OH, HOW I HATE THESE MELANCHOLY MOMENTS! HERE COME THE WATERWORKS!
HA HA HA!

I WILL STAY HERE, AND PUT ALL I HAVE INTO BUILDING STRONG MARIONETTES.


MADAME LUCILLE... HARD TO BELIEVE SHE'S NEVER SENT SO MUCH AS A LETTER, EVEN THOUGH SHE KNOWS YOU'RE HERE.
...I'M A TRAITOR WHO FLED AND ABANDONED THE CAUSE. WE EACH KNOW THE OTHER IS ALIVE. THAT'S ENOUGH.

EXCUSE ME!
YOU SURE ARE SOMETHING.
MORE OF A WIFE THAN SHOUJI DESERVES!

I HOPE THAT BABY GROWS UP HAPPY AND HEALTHY.
SORRY, SORRY, JUST A JOKE.
I'VE GOTTA GO!
YES... THANK YOU, DEAN.
GOOD-BYYYE!
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ジャン
ジャン
BORN TO THE VERY FIRST SHIROGANE COUPLE! HA HA HA!
GOOD LUCK TO THE BABY...

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN.
WELL ...
YES.
THERE HE GOES...

LET'S SEE NOW, IS THE BLEACHED COTTON CLOTH IN HERE? DID YOU PACK A CHANGE OF SANDALS?

SIR, WE DID PACK THE LUGGAGE VERY CAREFULLY...
NO, NO, NO, YOU CAN NEVER BE TOO CAREFUL!

I'VE ALREADY TOLD YOU IT'S REALLY TOO EARLY TO BE HEADING HOME TO GIVE BIRTH. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO INSISTED...
BUT I'M WORRIED!
DEAR, YOU'RE DISTURBING THE OTHER PASSENGERS.
NOT ONE THING CAN BE LACKING WHEN MY WIFE RETURNS TO HER HOME VILLAGE TO GIVE BIRTH!

The timing isn't exactly up to me...
Don't have the baby until I get there
I CAN'T GET AWAY FROM TOKYO RIGHT NOW, BUT AS SOON AS AUTUMN COMES I'LL BE FREE OF WORK AND ON MY WAY.
I CAN'T POSSIBLY EAT ALL THAT.
EXACTLY! YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN TO STOP PUSHING YOURSELF. GOT TO GET YOU PACKED OFF TO THE COUNTRYSIDE TO TAKE IT EASY!
HERE, TAKE THESE TOO!

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APPARENTLY IT'S A LITTLE VILLAGE OF PUPPETEERS IN THE KINAI REGION. I BELIEVE THE NAME IS—
I DON'T QUITE RECALL WHERE MILADY SAID SHE WAS HEADED ...
You're years too early, dear.
YOU DON'T OFTEN SEE SUCH A PAIR OF LOVE-BIRDS.
I've never seen a man act this way before
THE MASTER IS SO EXCITED.
YOU'RE GETTING AHEAD OF YOURSELF AGAIN!

I'LL GO ON AHEAD TO KUROGA VILLAGE, THEN. THOUGH I HATE TO GO ALONE.
MAKE SURE TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, DEAR.
AND DON'T YOU LIFT ANYTHING TOO HEAVY. TAKE IT EASY!

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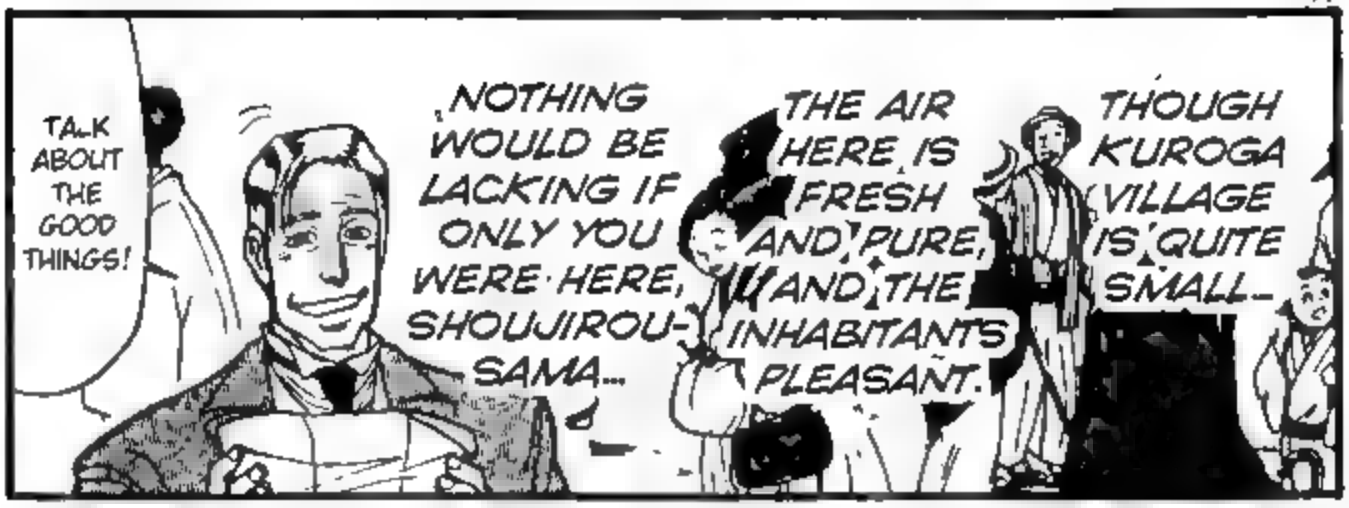
WITH THE BANK NEGOTIATIONS WRAPPED UP, I BELIEVE I'LL HEAD HOME FOR THE DAY.
WE'LL HAVE A CAR SENT ROUND FOR YOU.

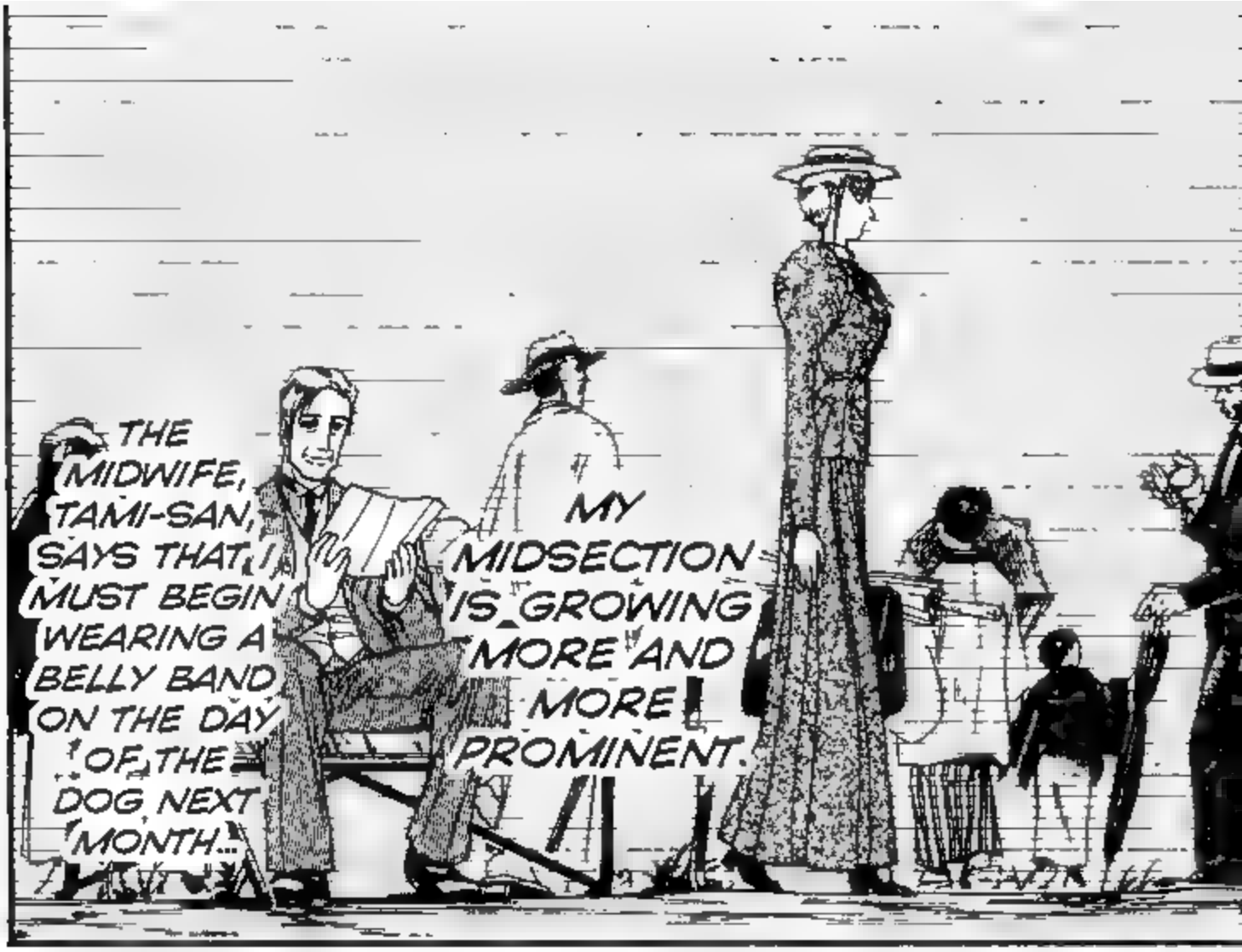
...TWO MONTHS LATER.
ガタリン

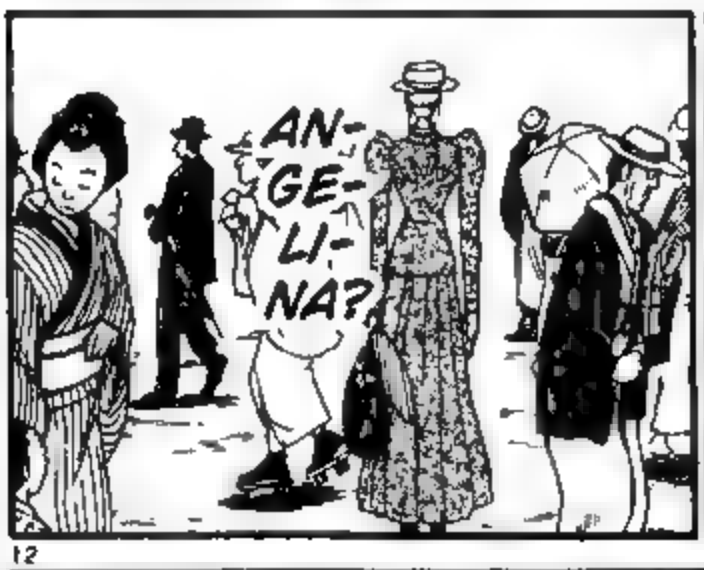
BUILDING: SHOGAIKAN MOVING PICTURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO

I AM TAKEN OCCASIONALLY WITH MORNING SICKNESS, BUT AM EXCEEDINGLY FORTUNATE IN ALL OTHER RESPECTS.
I TRUST THAT ALL REMAINS WELL WITH YOU, DEAR SHOUJI-SAMA.

11


TALK ABOUT THE GOOD THINGS!
NOTHING WOULD BE LACKING IF ONLY YOU WERE HERE, SHOUJIROU-SAMA...
THE AIR HERE IS FRESH AND PURE, AND THE INHABITANTS PLEASANT.
THOUGH KUROGA VILLAGE IS QUITE SMALL-


THE MIDWIFE, TAMI-SAN, SAYS THAT I MUST BEGIN WEARING A BELLY BAND ON THE DAY OF THE DOG NEXT MONTH...
MY MIDSECTION IS GROWING MORE AND MORE PROMINENT.


AN-GE-LI-NA?

!

12

AND THOSE WESTERN CLOTHES ...
BUT THAT SILVER HAIR ...

NO, THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! ANGELINA IS IN KUROGA VILLAGE RIGHT NOW. I HAVE HER LETTER RIGHT HERE.

HEY, YOU! THAT HURT!
THEN WHO ELSE COULD IT POSSIBLY BE?!
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WATCH IT, PAL!
IF THAT ISN'T ANGE-LINA...!

WHAT'S IN HERE?
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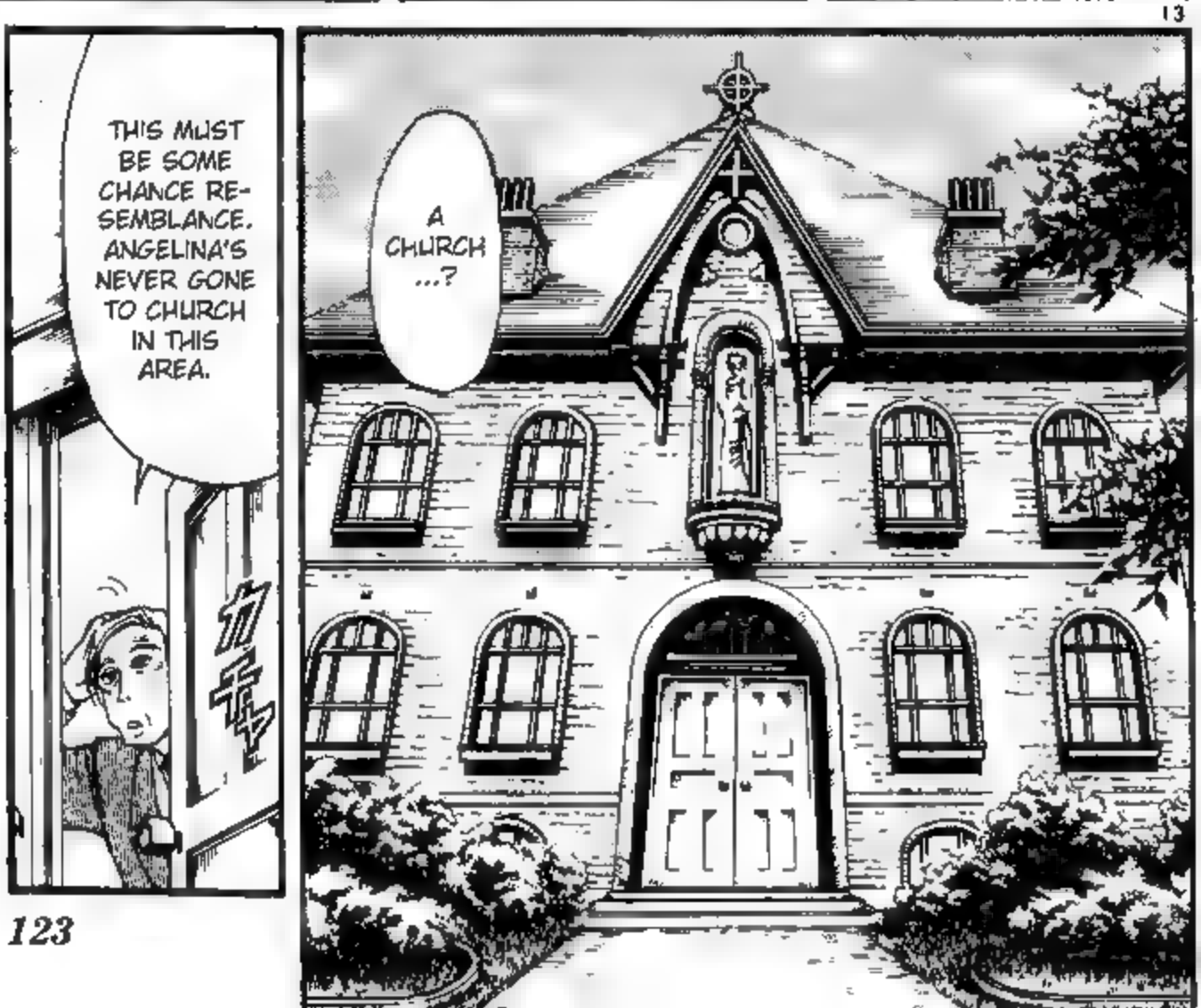
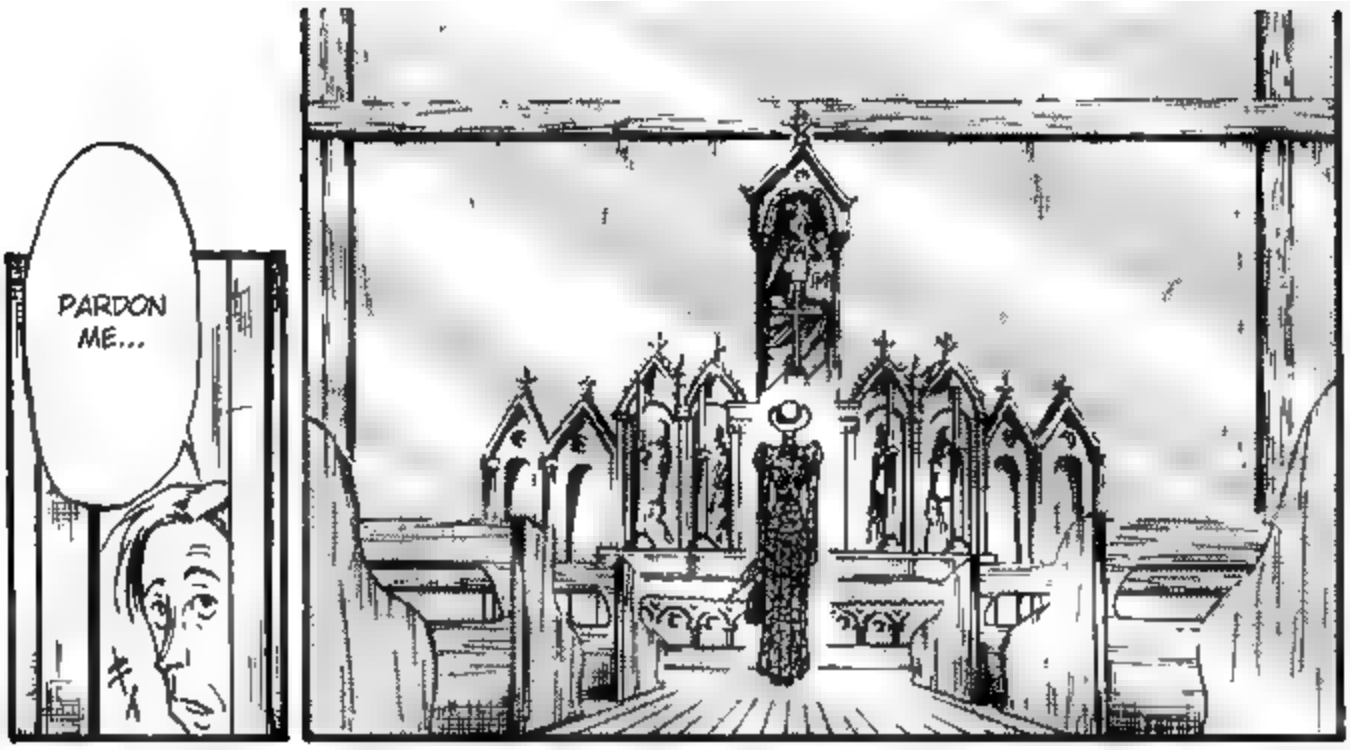
SHE'S GOING IN...

13


THIS MUST BE SOME CHANCE RE-SEMBLANCE. ANGELINA'S NEVER GONE TO CHURCH IN THIS AREA.
ガチャ
A CHURCH ...?


PARDON ME...

ER...
DO PEOPLE DECORATE HIGH PLACES WITH THIS SUFFERING FIGURE?
WHY ...

IN MY JOURNEY, I HAVE SEEN A GREAT MANY SUCH FIGURES.
ARE YOU ASKING ME?

WHEN THEY LOOK UPON THIS UNMOVING DOLL...
DO HUMANS THINK OF THINGS THAT CAUSE THEM TO SMILE?
THEY ARE PLACED SO AS TO BE VISIBLE TO EVERYBODY.

BUT I'M FAIRLY SURE PEOPLE DON'T FIND THIS SOMETHING TO SMILE AT. JUST THE REVERSE, IN FACT.
WELL, NOW, UH, I'M NOT EXACTLY AN EXPERT...
BUT THIS IS A DIFFERENT PERSON...

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?! SHE LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE ANGELINA!

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WELL, THERE ARE A LOT OF THEM... MURDER, COVETOUSNESS...
OH, I THINK ANOTHER WAS—

SIN...? WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

AND REFLECT ON YOUR OWN LIFE, THEY SAY IT CAN INSPIRE YOU TO LIVE RIGHT.
THIS FOREIGN RELIGION TEACHES THAT THIS IS A MAN BORE THE WEIGHT OF EVERYBODY'S SIN. WHEN YOU THINK OF THIS CRUCIFIED FIGURE ...
RE-VERSE ...?

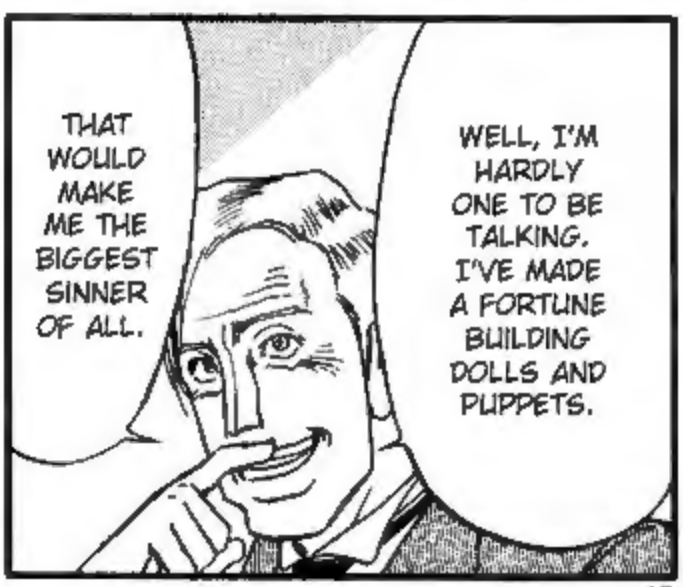
"MAKE UNTO THEE NO IMAGES OF WORDLY THINGS." SOMETHING LIKE THAT...

I SEE ...
SO DOLLS ARE A SIN...

WELLLL, THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO IMITATE HUMANS, SO...
SORRY, I MIGHT HAVE RE-MEMBERED THAT ONE WRONG.

DOES THAT ... IN-CLUDE DOLLS ...?

SFX: KLIK KLIK KLIK


THAT WOULD MAKE ME THE BIGGEST SINNER OF ALL.
WELL, I'M HARDLY ONE TO BE TALKING. I'VE MADE A FORTUNE BUILDING DOLLS AND PUPPETS.

17

AND THAT FAINT SOUND OF MACHINERY IN MOTION... DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE—
HOW DO YOU KNOW ANGE-LINA?!
WHO ARE YOU?!
18
AND I'M ANGE-LINA'S HUS-BAND!
WELL, MY NAME IS SAIGA SHOUJI!
I... AM THE AUTO-MATON FRAN-CINE.
I... HAVE COME HERE IN ORDER TO MEET THIS PERSON.

translation by funnuraba.tumblr.com

NOTES:

 # pg. 9: The tradition of returning to one's parent's home after the wedding, or to give birth, was called *satogaeri*. (My guess is that the other passengers are so taken aback, and Angelina is embarrassed, because they're taking *satogaeri* to mean the trip home right after the wedding, but Shouji also mentions giving birth; i.e., it sounds like she's a newlywed who got pregnant so early that this trip will combine both meanings of the word.)

 # pg. 9: The little outfit with 金 (*kin*) on it is the haragake worn by the fairy tale character Kintarou, something for a little boy (not a baby) on Children's Day (celebrated as Boys Day back in 1909.) Kintarou is very popular on Children's Day as a doll and in various other forms; he encourages boys to grow up strong.

 # pg. 11: Shogakukan is the publishing house that puts out Shounen Sunday, the magazine in which Karakuri Circus ran, and handles all of Fujita's shounen works.

 # pg. 12: The day of the dog comes every 12 days, and in their fifth and ninth months of pregnancy, women traditionally visit a shrine on one of those days to pray for safe and easy delivery (like that of a dog delivering a litter). The day of the dog is also the proper time to start wearing a maternity bellyband (*hara-obi*) to keep your belly warm.

 # pg. 18: The personal pronoun Doll Francine uses is *watakushi*; it's emphasized because this is the first time she's actually used it while speaking to Shouji. In context, it gives her sort of a stately and imposing sound, in contrast to the previous tone of the conversation.

In October of 2016, Kodansha USA will be releasing the first volume of Fujita's seinen series **Black Museum: The Ghost and the Lady**! The second and final volume will follow in December. If you're enjoying *Karakuri Circus*, this is a great opportunity to show your support for the creator and show that there's a market for his work over here! Full disclosure: his shounen series are published through Shogakukan, (i.e., Viz) so buying this release is not a direct pipeline to licenses for them. However, this is the first of Fujita's manga *ever* to be licensed in English since he debuted in 1989. Sentai Filmworks will also be releasing their dub and subs of the *Ushio and Tora* anime at some point, which is another great way to show your support. Please remember that each chapter of this manga represents an entire work week for Fujita and his assistants, and they deserve to be paid for their work in whatever way possible!

These scanlations have been uploaded *only* to Batoto so that I can remove them if the series is ever licensed. Please read them there instead of on websites that rip them and watermark them to make a profit off your views!

Thanks to Judash137 on the mangafox forums for removing the Japanese text, and to the anonymous person who tipped me off to that!

Any group with more experience or skill is welcome to take over at any time or to redo chapters I have already done if they are below the quality that this series deserves.